(b) whether Government have taken note of the media reports suggesting that Bangladesh has entered into agreement with China to develop and purchase its natural gas fields;

(c) if so, whether such a Sino-Bangla agreement may impinge upon the prospects of proposed Indo-Bangla cooperation on natural gas; and

(d) if so, what were the circumstances that Bangladesh preferred China over India for such cooperation?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI DINSHA J. PATEL): (a) India had pursued the import of natural gas from Bangladesh. However, Bangladesh held the view that considering their internal demand of gas, they do not have sufficient quantity of gas to export. So presently India does not have a proposal to import gas from Bangladesh.

(b) There have been media reports about Chinese investment for developing gas reserves in Bangladesh and for industries for value added projects. However, there is no confirmation of any agreement between China and Bangladesh.

(c) and (d) Do not arise in view of (a) and (b) above.

Gap in assessment of rate of WPI

†1008. SHRI RAJ MOHINDER SINGH MAJITHA:
SHRI RAM JETHMALANI:

Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that a wide gap has been noticed in preliminary assessment and final assessment regarding the rate of whole-sale price index during the first five weeks of the year 2007-08;

(b) if so, the details of the gap, week-wise;

(c) whether Government have made any final assessment regarding the rate of Wholesale Price Index in first three months of the current year; and

(d) if so, the rate thereof and how far it exceeds the preliminary assessment?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI PAWAN KUMAR BANSAL): (a) to (d) Yes Sir. Final assessment of the inflation is made after 8 weeks.

Table: WPI based inflation (in per cent) and gap between provisional and final figures

Wk. No.	Date	Provisional	Final	Gap
1	2	3	4	5
1	07-Apr-07	6.09	6.44	0.35
2	14-Apr-07	6.09	6.34	0.25

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.

1	2	3	4	5
3	21-Apr-07	5.77	6.07	0.30
4	28-Apr-07	5.66	6.01	0.35
5	05-May-07	5.44	5.74	0.30
6	12-May-07	5.27	5.62	0.35
7	19-May-07	5.06	5.30	0.25
8	26-May-07	4.85	5.15	0.30
9	02-Jun-07	4.80	5.09	0.29
10	09-Jun-07	4.28	4.28	0.00

Production and pricing of gas

†1009. SHRI RAJ MOHINDER SINGH MAJITHA:
SHRI RAM JETHMALANI:

Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that there is a gap between demand and supply of gas in the country;

(b) if so, the details in this regard;

(c) whether it is also a fact that only licensed Government institutions have been permitted to produce gas in the country;

(d) if so, whether it is also a fact that Government have promised to the producers that the sale price of gas will be fixed on the basis of market requirement; and

(e) if so, the reasons for neglecting the interests of consumers by Government?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI DINSHA J. PATEL): (a) and (b) Yes, Sir. The Report of the Working Group on Petroleum & Natural Gas for the Eleventh Plan has estimated a total demand of 179.17 Million Standard Cubic Metres Per Day (MMSCMD) for the year 2007-08. The gas availability for the year 2006-07 was about 96 MMSCMD, including about 23 MMSCMD of imported Liquefied Natural Gas (LNG).

(c) Under New Exploration Licensing Policy (NELP), license for exploration/ production is awarded through International Competitive Bidding System. National Oil Companies (NOCs) are required to compete on an equal footing with other Private and International Companies to secure exploration licenses.

(d) and (e) In terms of the provisions of Production Sharing Contracts (PSCs), the operator has the freedom to market gas to be produced from contract area in the domestic market. However, the pricing formula or the basis requires approval of the Government. Further, the contractor is required to discover the market price of gas on the basis of competitive arms length principle.

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.